

# BUSINESS MEETING A BIG SUCCESS.

## Meistersingers Capture Hearts of all Present---Many Encores.

Nearly Three Hundred Persons Present at Annual Meeting of Chamber of Commerce—Excellent Supper Served and Fine Speeches from Secretaries McKead, Marchant and Brown—The Hotel and Seaboard Situation—C. E. Ashburner Explains Commission Form of Government with City Manager.

There were nearly three hundred persons present at the annual business meeting of the Chamber of Commerce Tuesday, which, from start to finish, was successful. The occasion was replete with interest for the people of Sumter and many matters connected with the Chamber of Commerce, the welfare of the town, and the future prosperity of the "Gamecock City" were set forth.

Chief of the attractions at the meeting was the famous Meistersinger quartet from Charleston. Again and again these sweet singers were encored, the audience being of one mind in their desire to hear more from them. Mr. Charles E. Ashburner, first general manager of Staunton, Va., made a short talk and explained fully the operation of the plan of city government such as that desired for Sumter by the Chamber of Commerce.

The reports of the president and secretary of the organization were heard with interest, as was the announcement of the appointment of officers for the ensuing year. The reports of Mr. R. I. Manning on the situation with regard to the construction of the Seaboard Air Line and of Mr. E. L. Witherspoon concerning the hotel situation were received with interest.

Following the completion of the business of the evening several commercial secretaries from cities in this State, who were present, were called on to make short talks along lines connected with their work, all of which were very interesting and some of which were very witty and put the big crowd, some of whom had commenced leaving, in a good humor.

The business part of the session—a part which was generally very much enjoyed by all—commenced shortly before 9 o'clock when all of those present were invited up to the Armory Hall, which was tastefully decorated for the occasion, and seated along the five rows of tables which extended the length of the hall, where a substantial repast of chicken stew was served by the ladies of the Aid Society of Temple Sanal who had prepared for the large crowd present.

### The Meistersingers.

The Meistersingers. Following the supper, many for the first time heard this famous Charleston quartet. The selections were appropriate and the first was so well received that another was demanded at once from the singers. The second selection brought on a third and there were many who clapped and applauded the singers for still more of their music. From their first appearance in the hall, when they were roundly applauded, the singers were applauded at every turn, so to speak, and it is possible that had they sung more, many of those present would have been willing right away to go to Charleston to hear more in the near future.

The songs sung by the quartette were mostly melodies and coon songs and were all light, catchy airs which were "the kind that took." At several stages during the proceedings the Meistersingers were called upon and each time they responded, and as one person said, "each song is just a little better than the one before," and then he added, "if that were possible." That is just the way the members of the Sumter Chamber of Commerce looked at it last night and that is the way they will think of it for many days to come.

The coming of the Meistersingers added much to the pleasure of the occasion and it is safe to say that any time they ever want a warm welcome anywhere they are sure to find it in Sumter, the hearts of whose people were certainly captured last night by their music.

### Reports.

Dr. Baker then made his annual report showing what had been done by the committees under him and what would probably be done during the coming year.

Following Dr. Baker came Secretary Snell who has worked so faithfully for the Chamber of Commerce during the time he has been here. Mr. Snell made a clear report of what had been done by the Chamber through him working with various committees and their aims for the future. His report is printed elsewhere in full so will not be entered into here.

Mr. R. I. Manning was next called upon to tell of the work on the Seaboard Air Line and the plan that railroad has for the future. Mr. Manning said that he had already told everybody all that he knew about the Seaboard and therefore there was nothing more that he could say on that very interesting subject. He said that there was one matter that he would like to call to the attention of those present. This was the matter of securing Pullman service on A. C. L. trains 53 and 52 between Charleston and Greenville.

He said that the first mistake was made when the Greenville Board of Trade claimed the credit for having secured this convenience, the second when the Charleston Chamber of Commerce claimed the credit, for in truth, so far as he knew, the matter was first taken up by Sumter Chamber of Commerce and the Pullman service has been secured after many efforts on the part of a committee appointed to obtain this service.

He stated that the promoter of the South Carolina Western Railroad, Mr. Bonsal, was a close-mouthed man, but that the road was putting down heavy rails and that Mr. Bonsal had insisted all the way through on securing as near an air line as possible and stated that this was because of the through freight which would run over the road. He (Mr. Manning) stated that he could see no other reason for this than the fact that the railroad was trying to secure a port for the Seaboard and he believed that Charleston was the objective point. If this was true, as he believed it was, it opened up vast avenues of trade which would in the future greatly develop those cities on the line and especially Charleston, as it would prove a gateway for trade with the Latin-American countries which would be of vast importance and of immense value. He thought the expenditure of the city and county to obtain this line from the coal fields to the coast was the best investment that had ever been made in Sumter. He stated that he was assured by Mr. Bonsal that the railroad would be in operation to Sumter by August 1st.

Mr. E. L. Witherspoon made his message concerning the hotel short and sweet. He stated that he was assured beyond a reasonable doubt that the people of Sumter would be given the chance of eating their Thanksgiving dinner in the new hotel building. This news was received with a great show of enthusiasm, as was the news given by Mr. Manning concerning the railroad.

The report of the canvassing committee, announcing the election as directors of the Chamber of Commerce, Messrs. S. C. Baker, R. B. Belser, L. D. Jennings, G. A. Lemmon, D. R. McCallum, Jr., J. W. McKelver, R. I. Manning, D. D. Moise, Neill O'Donnell, was made by Mr. C. M. Hurst in a brief statement.

### Dr. Baker Re-elected.

Following this report Secretary Snell made an announcement of the election of officers for the ensuing year. He stated that Dr. S. C. Baker had been re-elected president of the organization; R. B. Belser, 1st vice-president; D. D. Moise, 2nd vice-president; and D. R. McCallum, Jr., Treasurer. Dr. Baker made a short inaugural address in which he stated that the Chamber of Commerce was to be congratulated on having retained the services of Mr. A. V. Snell as secretary.

Dr. Baker in his inaugural address stated that it was with reluctance that he again took the management of Sumter's commercial body as there was nothing in his line of training which made him peculiarly fitted for this position. However, he appreciated the honor which had been conferred upon him and thanked the people for having re-elected him. He would do all in his power to make the coming year as successful or more successful, than the one just ended. He was flattered at this mark of trust and while he had in the past committed errors, he would try to learn by what had been done wrongly to do well in the future. He thanked the members of the organization for the support which they had given him in the past and asked for their continued efforts, "and," he declared, "There was nothing too great to aspire to or too difficult to accomplish with time and perseverance and 'Sumter Spirit' and Sumter soil."

He believed that the welfare of the city was indissolubly knit with the welfare of the county and the two must work hand in hand to for in urban development. He stated that he was even more impressed than ever before with the absolute necessity of diversification of farm

products and industries. He urged the people to establish their own canning factories and instead of having goods shipped in to have enough for themselves and some to ship out. He thought that a large canning factory would be located here in the near future and thought it would prove a great help to the community. He urged the farmers to plant grain and raise their own pork and beef. He thought that corn was a money crop which demanded especial attention at this time.

Mr. H. W. Beall later took up the matter of making corn a money crop and showed how this was done in the west and how it might be done in the South also.

### Committees.

Next came the announcement of committees. The heads of each committee was announced as follows:

Department of Industry—J. W. McKelver in charge; New Industries, E. L. Witherspoon; New Business, D. W. Cuttino; Manufacturing, F. C. Manning.

Department of Membership, Entertainment, Conventions—D. D. Moise in charge; Membership, B. Walsh; Entertainment, L. I. Parrott; Conventions, Geo. L. Ricker; Quarters, J. A. McKnight; Expositions, fairs, carnivals, J. J. Westcott.

Department of Transportation—R. I. Manning in charge; Traffic and Freight Rates, J. K. Crosswell; Public Utilities, J. F. Glenn; Postal Affairs, Geo. D. Shore; Railroad Extension, Passenger Service, H. C. Haynsworth.

Department of Publicity and Education—G. A. Lemmon in charge; Advertising, H. G. Osteen; Press, H. A. Moses; Industrial Excursions, Henry Moses; Education, S. H. Edmunds.

Department of Commerce—Neill O'Donnell in charge; Wholesale, Abe Ryttenberg; Retail, J. H. Levy; Finance and Banking, C. G. Rowland; General Business, W. B. Upshur.

Department of Civic and Public Affairs—L. D. Jennings in charge; Health and Sanitation, Dr. H. M. Stuckey; Parks and Buildings, E. C. Haynsworth; Fire Protection and Building Code, R. S. Hood; Legislature, G. W. Dick.

Department of Rural Relations—R. B. Belser in charge; Highways, H. J. McLaurin, Jr.; Home Market, R. F. Haynsworth; Farm Improvement, Diversification, H. L. Scarborough; County Fair, W. B. Boyle; Immigration, A. J. Stubbs.

(Only the heads of the committees are named.)

### Mr. C. E. Ashburner.

Dr. Baker introduced Mr. Charles E. Ashburner of Lynchburg, Va., as "the man who had made one dollar do what three dollars had done previously and do it better." Mr. Ashburner is not what one might call an eloquent speaker, but he impressed the audience with the fact that he was a man who knew what he was talking about when he spoke on the management of city affairs. He made only a brief talk and then offered to answer any questions which were put to him in his line, his answers to the questions asked being clear and in every way convincing.

Mr. Ashburner stated that the Staunton plan was not the best plan of city government, but it was a great deal better than the old one. The Sumter plan comprehended the two forms of commission government in a more business-like way than any other plan he had heard of and he hoped that the people of Sumter would choose the form of government with the three directors and the city manager. He said that about fifty years ago South Carolina had taken up a big proposition that was not carried through as she had desired, but he hoped that this proposition of her own people would be carried through successfully. He said that he had been over Sumter during the day and that the people here owed a big debt to the men who had made her. She was now a fine city, but how much better a city would she have been had she been run in a more business-like way? The members of council might be men of exceptional ability, but they were too much engrossed in their private affairs to waste their time on the city's business when they were not paid for this work.

He stated that the city manager should have absolute charge of everything connected with the management of the city, but he must not handle the funds of the city. He was to be strictly an executive officer. Everybody was to be under his supervision. All expenditures were to be made by him and he must keep a record of them and balance his books with the treasurer's books every month. In answer to an inquiry as to which was the better plan of government, the regular commission form or the commission form having a city manager, Mr. Ashburner stated that the form with the board of directors and city manager was the best. If the regular commission form was carried here and the men were not required to give all of their time to work the city would suffer. What was needed was a man of ability in charge who should "give all of his

time and his heart as well." This was the business side of the proposition and the best feature of it.

Mr. Ashburner was heard with the deepest attention, showing the great interest which the people of the city have in the new form of government proposed for Sumter and how they are trying to learn something about it and its operation before they go to the polls to vote on it.

### Secretaries Talk.

Mr. A. W. McKead of Charleston was glad to visit Sumter again and congratulated Sumter on its endeavors to put the city government on a firm basis. He had known the man who drew the first charter for the city which first adopted the commission form of government and he believed in the man and in the form of government. He hoped that Sumter would adopt this form of government and the plan with the city manager was a good one. He said that while Sumter was trying to set its affairs on a firm basis, Charleston had accomplished a work that would be of great value to her in the future—the establishment of a dock commission so that she could not settle her own port disputes. She was also to have municipal ownership of docks so that any ship which wanted to could come into Charleston harbor. He said that "natural advantages had damned more cities and people" than any other thing—it was not natural advantages but the "pull together spirit which accomplished things."

Mr. H. A. Marchant of Orangeburg made a short talk and told a few jokes. He stated that he was glad to be in Sumter representing the Orangeburg Chamber of Commerce and hoped that he would in the future have the pleasure of seeing more of Sumter people. He read a stanza from "The Houn' Song" and stated that the South had been a "houn' dong" long enough and people "just had to quit kickin' that dog around." He stated that the percentages of investment in the South during the past thirty years had been greater than ever before and greater than in other parts of the country and that the South now offered wider fields for investment than any other part of the country. He urged the people to raise at home more of the things they needed and not to send off for them. He was thoroughly in accord with the idea which had emanated from this body for a State Board of Trade.

Mr. R. E. Browne of Rock Hill made a short, witty talk which highly pleased his audience at the late hour. He told of the wonderful street car line in Rock Hill with its modern motor cars which had made the representative of the French government say that Rock Hill was the finest town in the United States. He got off some good jokes about Rock Hill and Sumter and stated that Sumter would always find Rock Hill willing to work with Sumter in any line which tended to the betterment of Rock Hill, Sumter, their counties, their State, and the whole nation.

The evening was closed with a selection from the Meistersingers, the Good Night Song. It was nearly 1 o'clock when the body adjourned and after one before most of them got to bed.

Secretary Morgan from Florence, Secretary Hamby and President Herbert of Columbia and President Gadsden of Charleston were unable to come to the meeting.

### Report of President Baker.

Gentlemen of the Chamber of Commerce:

As the official head of this body it is my duty and pleasure to submit to you at this close of the term, a report of the work done or attempted by the members of the several departments during the year, which ends with this meeting. This I shall endeavor to do as briefly and concisely as possible.

Through the efforts of the committee on membership, headed by Mr. D. D. Moise, 267 members were enrolled and about \$4,200 pledged at the beginning of the year. These members however pledged themselves for 12 months only. Under the auspices of this same committee, with the assistance of Messrs. Bartow Walsh and A. J. Stubbs as captains, respectively, of the Blues and the Reds with their lieutenants, another campaign has just been ended with the result that 337 members are now upon our roll, all pledged as permanent members with dues of not less than \$10.00 a year, each. While this will not aggregate quite so large an amount as was subscribed last year, it is to be remembered that certain organization expenses, such as furniture and the like, have been paid for and will not occur again. We have abundant income to meet our fixed expenses for the coming year, with some to spare, and should an extraordinary demand arise we have but to call forth the efforts of the finance committee, and past experience has proven that the "Sumter spirit" will rise to the occasion and provide ample means for the emergency.

Mr. O'Donnell the chairman of the Finance Committee, and Mr. D. R.

McCallum, our efficient Treasurer, have worked together most harmoniously and have given us a strict account of all funds raised by or entrusted to them.

Mr. Belser, chairman of the Committee on Highways, has been able to get through such legislation as to guarantee to the county commissioners, by increased commutation tax and from other sources, sufficient funds to meet the good roads situation without a further bond issue. He has also secured provision for a road engineer and, if the rains ever give us a chance to get to work, we may hope for steady and permanent road improvement. Mr. Pitts has been constantly proving to us the value of the split log drag.

Mr. Glenn's Committee on Streets has been badly handicapped by the unprecedented rainfall this winter. One new street, however, opening up desirable territory in the northeastern section of the city, has been put through, and there are others in prospect.

Dr. Dick's Committee on Legislation, with the assistance of his fellow members of the Sumter delegation, has secured for us the passage of three measures in which we were vitally interested. 1st. The opportunity to vote upon the commission form of government, which will come up this summer. 2nd. The provision for the map of Sumter County showing township and school district lines, and 3rd. the assignment of sufficient money from the county funds to secure the Seaboard without private aid, a matter which is entirely proper since the increased taxes paid into the county treasury will soon repay her for the money expended and ever afterwards leave all further payments as a net gain.

The parlor car on the Charleston-Greenville train has passed the experimental stage and will continue in service to the satisfaction of all concerned. Since then home seekers' rates have also been granted to Sumter and there has been much improvement around the passenger station.

No question of freight rates has been referred to the committee in charge of that department but Mr. Crosswell has held himself and his committee ready to act when called upon. The matter of re-organizing the Northwestern schedule will come up for consideration before the Railroad Commission here in Sumter on May 8th.

Mr. Manning's Committee on Railroad Extension has almost completed its first assignment, that of landing the Seaboard for us, and we may expect soon to hear the foot of the engines as they hurry on to the "city by the sea." Mr. Manning and his committee deserve the hearty thanks of all our citizens for their untiring efforts in this work. In passing I will say that we are just six months nearer to several other railroad projects, elective and otherwise than we were at our last report.

Mr. McKelver's Committee on Manufactures has about landed one more proposition since last report, viz. the shoe factory, and there is no telling what new thing in the shape of canned goods he has up his sleeve for the coming 12 months.

Mr. E. L. Witherspoon of the Hotel Committee has apparently made good in his department, unless he is only treating us to a picture show. Let us hope that the 7-storied affair he has told us of is not "all stories," jesting aside, the committee has every reason to believe that work on the new hotel will be started by April 15th.

Mr. Osteen of the Advertising Committee has pushed along the work as foreshadowed in our last report. We have all seen the beautiful moving pictures taken in and around Sumter and we must pause to thank Secretary McKead of Charleston for the idea. You have had the advertising booklet presented to you tonight and a little later in the spring the advertising trip to Richmond, Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York will be pulled off.

Mr. Chandler's Committee on Extension of Trade, with the assistance of Mr. Levy's organization of retailers put through their bargain day program as planned in November. As a business venture it was a success and the athletic contests at the time were enjoyed by all. In the past few weeks the National Biscuit Company and the S. and S. Packing Company have established branches here.

The Refreshment Committee under Mr. Parrott has again proven itself able to cope with the situation, especially when assisted by the ladies of the Jewish Aid Society.

The Committee on Rural Relations continues to foster friendly intercourse with our brethren of the county and we may expect a bountiful return in votes this summer.

We are sorry that Mr. Scarborough's Committee on Farm Improvement was not able to land the agricultural experiment station which they worked for so earnestly last fall, but Florence had more winning ways. However "he laughs best who laughs last" and Mr. Scarborough may have better luck in his next venture.

Mr. Ryttenberg's Committee on Encouragement of Home Supply is still standing by its promise to help the farmers market their produce and will be glad to co-operate with Mr. Dab's and the Farmers' Union in the study and development of scientific marketing.

Prof. Edmunds' Committee on Education is to be congratulated upon putting through the matter of the county map. To this committee must also be credited the establishment of a branch of the Southern Commercial school in this city. Its location here will enable us to hold many of our young men at home while pursuing their business courses instead of going elsewhere. I do not know under what more appropriate department than that of education can be included the magnificent Y. M. C. A. building, at the head of which Prof. Edmunds has also stood. Education is not to be confined to book learning alone, but to the better fitting of man in every way for his environment, to his development, morally and physically, as well as mentally. The first two of these the Y. M. C. A. is peculiarly fitted to accomplish.

I do not feel that I can say too much in commendation of the work of Mr. Snell, our efficient secretary, and his office force. He has proved himself resourceful and thorough and the Chamber is to be congratulated upon retaining his services for the coming year.

This summarizes the work of the 17 committees and offices of the Chamber of Commerce for the past one-half year. With the sum of their achievements, it seems to me we have reason to be proud. We began the year unorganized and inexperienced in civic upbuilding and more than doubtful of ourselves and of each other. Through the year we have striven together. Each success has given us greater confidence. We come to the end having faith in the abilities of each man and confident that team work will count. That is the great idea—"team work"—I give you a slogan, "One for all, and all for one"—Sumter—the Gamecock City.

### Report of Secretary Snell.

The Constitution of this Chamber provides that the Secretary shall submit an annual report at this time. In this report I shall attempt to summarize as briefly as possible the results that have been attained and to outline the work of my office for the year. I have been with you for about a year and a half months that I have been with you. I have performed the duties of the office and Directors, and your Secretary, that is not brought to the notice of the public, but which is, nevertheless, of much consequence, and contributes to the general result. It is only the more important matters that are brought to your attention. Yet you should constantly bear in mind that the ultimate success of such an association as this depends in great measure upon the spirit and co-operation manifested by the individual members. While the officers plan the campaigns the real fighting force is the membership.

While the year 1911-1912 has been exceptionally trying upon all business and has hindered the general progress of the South, yet I believe that Sumter has reason to be proud of the record that she has made as evidenced in material results and general advancement and improvements in almost every line of civic and business endeavor. These accomplishments are self-evident, are of a permanent and lasting nature, and are foundations upon which still greater results must eventually follow. I believe, therefore, that we have every reason to congratulate ourselves upon the showing that has been made. Personally I desire at this time to thank the membership of this Chamber as a whole for the hearty support that has been given me in my own particular line of work. A great deal of faithful work has been performed by individual members and the thanks of this body is due these men. In fact our thanks are due to every man and woman who, without reward, has tried to do something for the community in order that it might be a better place in which to live. As a whole your Board of Directors has served you faithfully and while they are all busy men of affairs, they have sacrificed many hours of their time for the community's good. Your president, especially, has labored faithfully for the up-building of city and county. No man could have done more, few have done as much for Sumter as he.

### Organization.

My first task, upon taking possession of the office of secretary, was to organize the same upon a business basis. At that time there were no files of membership, no reports of work accomplished heretofore, no reliable data as to the city and general improvements year by year, no report of building operations, facts relative to annual freight and passenger service, as to schools, churches, homes and generally such facts and statistics that are universally on file in every Chamber of Commerce in the country and which must be had be-